

Us Has Thoughts!

Why Do We Love When Stars Go to Court?

Guilty as charged! That is, of following every single detail of the trials and fates that befall the rich and famous. *Us* breaks down why

➤ We trace our favorite A-listers' every move, whether it's their new brand deal, latest movie, "candid"

selfie or even what they're having for breakfast. But when a star heads to court, it captures the public's fascination in unprecedented ways. Don't believe *Us*? Take the 503,000 results that appear when you Google "**Gwyneth Paltrow** ski trial" as proof. But what is it about celebs appearing before the law that drives our rabid, voyeuristic obsession? "Celebrity trials offer a rare, unscripted look into the lives of people who usually exist behind a polished media persona," **Joe Tacopina**, a defense attorney who has represented celeb clients like **Michael Jackson** and **A\$AP Rocky**, tells *Us*. "Courtrooms are great equalizers — status, fame and wealth don't exempt anyone from due process."

Paltrow had her day in court in 2023 when she was sued for an alleged ski hit-and-run that occurred on a Utah mountain in 2016. Absent a plea deal, no amount of privilege, money, publicists or clout could get the actress out of appearing in what essentially became a meme-ified trial (and a literal musical). And that's a huge part of the appeal. "Seeing a star in a courtroom instead of a luxury car instantly levels the playing field," **Evan Nierman**, founder and CEO of global PR firm Red Banyan, tells *Us*. "It's one of the few places where they can't rely on filters, publicists or curated feeds, and that vulnerability makes them feel strangely relatable. Even the biggest

names start to look like regular people dealing with real-world problems when they're sweating it out." It's the ultimate example of "Stars, They're Just Like Us!"

But let's not forget: These celebs do differ from everyday folk in that they often have the resources to pay for the best lawyers in the game. (Paltrow won her case, after all, as well as a countersuit, for which she was awarded attorneys fees plus \$1.) **Kim Kardashian** proved that point a millionfold (literally) when she wore a \$1.5 million diamond necklace to testify about her 2016 Paris robbery on May 13, making a statement of strength — and extravagance — with her fashion.

In some cases, it's more the spectacle than the relatability that has the public devouring every detail of what went down in that courtroom. Which brings *Us* to another interesting element to the madness: While the **Johnny Depp vs. Amber Heard** defamation trial (and countersuit) of 2022 kept folks enraptured with a daily live stream in the courtroom, cases like **Kardashian's** and **Sean "Diddy" Combs'** ongoing sex trafficking trial are not televised, with restrictions against what recording devices are allowed in the courtroom. "If anything, keeping Diddy's case quiet has only made people more curious," Nierman says. "The less they hear, the

Take it from *Us*:
Kardashian's,
Paltrow's and A\$AP
Rocky's respective
trials made up some
of our top-performing
stories online.

more they speculate, and that creates a breeding ground for conspiracy theories and clickbait." Tacopina adds that the public's absorption in A\$AP Rocky's gun assault trial did add pressure to his job on the defense team. "We had to manage not only legal challenges but also a narrative being shaped [simultaneously] across headlines and social media," he tells *Us*. "It creates a parallel courtroom — one of public opinion. But at the end of the day, the only people that matter to me are the 12 jurors in the box." (A\$AP, a.k.a. Rakim Mayers, was acquitted.)

A case like Diddy's — in which each lurid detail that comes out is worse than the last — also unites the public in creating a villain: "Watching A-listers forced to face the music is like getting a backstage pass to their downfall, and people love it because it feels like a peek behind the velvet rope of fame," Nierman says. At the end of the day, the most important thing about these celebrity trials is this: We aren't the ones at risk of losing it all. So while following along gives us an oddly sterile — and sometimes theatrical — reality show playing out in real-time, we don't have to worry about facing any of the consequences themselves. As Nierman says, "It's messy, it's dramatic and most importantly, it's not happening to us."

MOLLY MCGUIGAN



LINDSAY LOHAN

Style, Growth and Finding Joy

➤ It's good to be **Lindsay Lohan**! *Freakier Friday* — the follow-up to the 2003 hit with **Jamie Lee Curtis** — is out in August; she and husband **Bader Shammas** will celebrate their son **Luai**'s second birthday in July; and her just-launched Old Navy activewear campaign, *Old Navy, New Moves* (co-starring **Charo**, **Dylan Efron** and **Quen Blackwell**), is a delightfully campy tribute to the '80s. Lohan, 38, talks to *Us* about her *bella vita*.

How has your personal style evolved over the years?

I'm more specific. I always need good pairs of leggings or jeans. A good blazer, good leather jacket, good shirts. I used to think you needed to have everything.

I'm guessing that becoming a mom had an impact.

Definitely. I always need a backup shirt, so that's changed. And comfort is more important than it used to be; I'm always on

Her Old Navy campaign was inspired by the retro workouts of pioneers like **Jane Fonda**: "We improvised a lot of it, which was really fun," Lohan says.



the move. I've become a bit more modest, even on red carpets. I just like to be a little

more buttoned up than I used to be.

Are there any revived trends you wish would go away?

Low-rise jeans. It might be that people used to wear *such* low-rise jeans. When I see that now, I'm like, Whoa, those are

actually borderline too low. There's one outfit I remember wearing: low-rise jeans, a Marc Jacobs satin top, a trucker hat and pointed Prada shoes. I'd take that back.

How are you feeling about the return of the *Freaky Friday* franchise?

You always have that fear that when something's so great on its own, can you do better and be just as funny and can it be as exciting? We

liked that challenge.

Jamie and I took that by the horns and ran with it, so it was fun, and actually, it was really comforting to go back into a character that I already know.

Is there anyone you haven't collaborated with yet that you'd like to?

"We're never thinking it's enough," Lohan says of motherhood. "Now I know what my mom went through."

So many! **Cate Blanchett**, **Julianne Moore**, **Nicole Kidman**, **Scarlett Johansson**...

What's your routine like these days?

I get up before my son, and I take my moment to wash my face, brush my teeth. That's my little moment. Then I rush downstairs and make my tea so that when my son comes down, I'm ready for him. I find so much joy in getting his breakfast ready. That's the best part of my day.



This Week in Ye Olde US

JUNE 14, 2010

➤ All was not well in *Housewives* land. **Jill Zarin**'s alleged jealousy over **Bethenny Frankel**'s breakout success had torn the two apart, but Zarin told *Us*, "I have hope that Bethenny and I will be able to share our lives again sometime." And they did! Frankel posted an Instagram photo of the two with their daughters in the Hamptons in July 2024.

➤ It was an innocent time for *Glee*, when the biggest headlines included costars **Naya Rivera** and **Mark Salling**'s relationship, accusations of "diva behavior" from **Lea Michele** and a rumored rivalry between guest stars **Kristin Chenoweth** and **Idina Menzel**. Sadly, in 2013, star **Cory Monteith** died, followed by Salling in 2015, the same year the show ended, and Rivera in 2020.

➤ Oops! Though **Mariah Carey** had stayed mum on her reason for bowing out of a **Tyler Perry** film, her then-husband, **Nick Cannon**, confirmed that she was pregnant. The two welcomed twins Moroccan and Monroe in April 2011.